



*Local Cuban special-category residents and commuters pose for a group photo during the Cuban-American Friendship Day celebration, Jan 26, at the Wind-jammer Ballroom. The number of Cuban residents and commuters has dwindled over the years to 57 Cuban residents and only three commuters.*

Photo by MC2(AW) Honey Nixon

## Cuban-American Friendship Day ... *Continued from page 1*

Frye. "I think it's really good they have Cuban American Friendship Day for the Cubans because they are an important part of our society in GTMO."

"It's an honor and a privilege to serve the Cuban community here," said Zaida Brewer, president of the Cuban-American Friendship Day committee. "I do this because it's the only way for me to truly express my love for them."

"My favorite part of this celebration is that we get to show our love for the Cubans that have worked and lived on this base for so long," added Brewer, who's been involved with Cuban residents for nine years.

Brewer was also this year's recipient of the 'Cuban American Friendship Award' specifically selected by the Special Category Residents and Cuban commuters as the person they feel has given the most to the local Cuban community.

Migdalia Hettler, this year's guest speaker, began working in GTMO in 1981 as a Spanish translator and assistant Cuban Affairs Officer. She became heavily involved in GTMO's Cuban community and received many awards and ac-

colades for her work.

"Today we honor the Cubans for the long years of faithful service and their contributions to the GTMO community," said Hettler. "They have always been the continuity, and a very significant part of the GTMO history. Today we recognize the sacrifices they made when deciding to remain loyal to the Americans and avoid Communism."

There are currently 57 Special Category residents and 3 commuters that comprise the Cuban community, and Hettler challenged base residents to educate themselves about the unique status of the Cubans here, and to cherish their fragile legacy.

"Our numbers of Cubans are diminishing radically. I strongly encourage the rest of the community to take time and make the effort to get to know them. Each one has a very interesting story to tell of the days when GTMO was a busy base, and when the place to be on weekends was Guantanamo City, eating Cuban food and listening to Latin music. The stories of the lives they left behind still fill their dreams every night."



Photo by MC2(AW) Honey Nixon

*Local elementary and high school students participated in a poster contest in honor of the event.*



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*Wesley Belleman, along with other W.T. Sampson Elementary School students, performs the "La Rosa."*